

'Convergence Culture' and Youth Activism in Egypt New Social Movements on the Block

Ibrahim Saleh

In many parts of the world, media and information literacy has provided a strong platform for young people to contribute to social, political, and economic development, give expression to cultural and religious pluralism, learn about the issues in other environments different from their own, and promote the democratic process.

Egypt is no difference and could not isolate itself from these lofty goals. The new media environment has provided new spaces and opportunities to transform societies, by offering the civil society and social movements impetus that enlightens the decision-making process with information, thus empowering individuals to take control of their destinies.

The research presented here aims to delve deeply into the role media and information literacy plays in the lives of young people in Egypt, the aim being to offer a new vision of media and information literacy that will provide young people with the skills required for effective participation in development activities, using creative media and providing opportunities to gather, analyze and disseminate information.

Two years ago, Egyptian youths captured the global attention and, for a short time, became the world's focus. But the revolution had become nothing but a regime change, and they had every reason to be angry. With the second anniversary of the revolution, something very different emerged on the streets of Egypt. Large groups of masked, black-clad youths began to appear, holding demonstrations, blocking railways, storming government buildings and unleashing a hail of molotovs onto the offices of the Brotherhood (Harvey, 2013).

This article attempts to draw a picture of the new reality of Egyptian youth and how they appropriate new media that seemed to redefine their roles, identities within the context of the public opposition to Islamists in Egypt. From 'Kefya Movement', 'April 6' to even the most recent social movement the 'Black Bloc' that adopt the ideas of anarchism, a common dominator among all of them is the moving beyond traditional methods of mobilization, leading to the creation of what Henry Jenkins (2006) has called 'convergence culture'.

Many Egyptian elite youth use their smart phones to check Facebook and Twitter, send text messages and check email. The real profound cultural transformation encourages new activists on the block to connect with friends for something much bigger, in this case overthrowing their government.

Middle East scholar Joel Beinin has calculated that there have been approximately three thousand worker-led protests in Egypt over the past decade, a situation indicative of the latent discontent with Mubarak's regime (Masoud, 2011). Egypt is plagued with a youth-bulge society, unable to provide jobs and

benefits for its disproportionately large young demographic.

Unemployment in Egypt is highest amongst university graduates (Assad & Roudi-Fahimi, 2011), and this is combined with autocratic regimes that are not in touch with the needs of the Egyptian people. The political, economic, and social problems run very deep in Egypt, which added another hurdle to its vulnerability that resulted the insufficient experience with democratic governance, broken social contract and weak educational systems. In addition, corruption, lack of natural resources, and inept bureaucracies crippled economic output thus making the future dim, but things cannot go back to what used to be considered normal (Saleh, 2012).

Such hardship has caused the angry public, especially the youth who have nothing else to lose. The Egyptian youth has become more aware that waiting for change can never happen on its own, and that new media is the only way to make this change. Those disenfranchised groups began to mobilize the society into a state of anarchism against the state especially that poverty, illiteracy and illness have eroded the former nostalgic ideas of romantic idealism of the past glorious past into contentious environment.

Social justice movements in Egypt have often been marginalized by mainstream communication systems, but are increasingly dependent on new media platforms to coordinate actions, mobilize and create networks, despite the fact that most of these movements have their origins in deprived communities. Political activism in Egypt has been experiencing a 'dangerous period' of setbacks, progress and hiccups, and successes are attributed to the many underlying socio-economic and political issues, including the historical factors that fueled the revolutions of early 2011. Hence, it is pertinent to contextualize the clear role played by social networking in both facilitating the actual events and bringing them to the attention of the whole world to an unparalleled degree, literally in "real time" (Storck, 2011).

In this context, new media and public engagement have redefined Egyptian society, and placed individuals at the centers of their own narratives in the most profound ways and in ways that incorporate production, distribution, and consumption of mass media (new and old). The Egyptians have thus rejected the long predominating official mediated narratives that have long kept them contained, while new narratives of protests and reaction to the harsh economic situation have become very popular and fulfilling to many youth in different sectors and parts of Egypt (El-Seewi, 2011)

The trajectory of the political protests in Egypt points to the need to keep track of the 'new' media environment in mapping the role of communication in anti-authoritarian movements. "These social networks inform mobilize, entertain,

create communities, increase transparency, and seek to hold governments accountable” (Ghannam 2011:4).

These new virtual possibilities provided a new space and redefined the traditional spaces, which in turn offered a new sense of belonging, a kind of bond and solidarity, both internally and with others in the region and beyond (Tung, 2011). This argument between cyber optimists and pessimists remains highly polarized in terms of understanding what *April 6* in Egypt, and other similar organizations actually did and how they did it (Pollock, 2008), which remains highly debatable issues with no clear answers. The perplexity here lies in the growing interest in participation and user-generated media and the lack of wisdom in the public sphere and for political agenda setting.

The article aims to study more seriously the social and cultural effects of new media in the construction of knowledge and values as well as to determine how these dynamics are embedded in more long-term historical developments promoting a greater role for the individual vis-a-vis established authorities (Hofheinz, 2011).

The fact remains that the Egyptian revolution and its consequent political events (good and bad) were about to happen anyway, regardless of the existence of the Internet or technology. Yet the connection between technology and society is central to this discussion: “technology *is* society, and society cannot be understood or represented without its technological tools” (Castells, 2005). As Evgeny Morozov (2011) points out,

The challenge of anyone analyzing how the Internet may affect the overall effectiveness of political activism, is first, to determine the kind of qualities and activities that are essential to the success of the democratic struggle in a particular country or context and second, to understand how a particular medium of campaigning or facilitating collective action affects those qualities and activities.

The article attempts to identify some of the new forms of cultural articulation and the increasing meditation of culture. Commenting on this change, professor of political science, Joseph Rudolph, stated that the most important example of using technology for political activism has to be Egypt: “There was use of technology to get hundreds of people to gather at ‘Tahrir Square’ (Liberation Square) night after night to protest. All it requires is a small group with access to a stage to protest,” he said. “It will take society time to adapt and realize how technology can be used to allow transparency. Technology ultimately changes the nature of society, and we are only just getting into the potential of this age of technology.”

This reality contrasts with most of the early scholarship such as Daniel Lerner's (1958) *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East* and James C. Davies's *Towards a Theory of Revolution*, which has always perceived Third World rioters as rootless individuals who have lost traditional norms and are incapable of following political agitators. However, there is an obvious misconception in this paradigm because it lacks the acknowledgement of both formal organization and informal networking as a precondition for any possible mobilization of communities towards protesting and activated structural social movements (Tilly, 1964).

It is thus important to differentiate between the use of the new media as a tool, by those seeking to bring about change from below, and the virtual imaginary space the media offer, where collective dissent can be articulated. Moreover, the current debate between utopian and dystopian perspectives has reached a deadlock instead of grasping the dialectical relationship between online and offline¹ political action.

Conceptual Framework

The social media should be assessed as part of a cross-media environment, or as a 'hybrid media ecology' (Jenkins, 2006; Benkler, 2006), in order to make rational connections between social media and mainstream media influence on agenda-setting and the changing public sphere in Egypt, in particular during periods of political transition.

This section aims to contextualize some of the broader, overlapping and interpenetrating ways in which media systems and communication networks have complexly conditioned and facilitated political changes (Cottle, 2011), by providing an alternative understanding of the role of technology and information in the events and by drawing on a number of relevant theories and models such as the "The SPIN Model"², "Information Warfare Lifecycle Model" and the "Resource Mobilization Theory."

Such new forms of political communication often come into being and can flourish when there is a felt need for them (Sreberny and Mohammadi, 1994), where they can perform a vital role in maintaining, expressing and steering political momentum and constituting a public sphere (or spheres) for a real societal deliberation.

It is thus crucial here to draw on social construction of technology and domestication theories, while arguing that social networking has not replaced traditional ways of mobilization, but has amplified them. The main hypothesis here is that both traditional mobilization tools and new innovative means of communication strengthen mobilization activities.

The research also draws on Ritter's (2010) notion that the emergence and success of nonviolent revolutions depend on the internationalization of these struggles and the presence of an *Iron Cage of Liberalism* (ICL) in countries experiencing a "revolutionary situation" (Tilly 1978), where autocratic leaders gradually lose their economic gains as a result of the increasing presence and empowerment of social movements in particular with the domestic opposition groups, thus highlighting the discrepancy between the regime's insincere commitment to the liberal democratic principles of the patron state and its actual performance in these areas.

First, the "SPIN Model: Segmentation, Polycentrism, Integration & Networks" offers a logical understanding of the social movements' ability to organize and initiate political change and affect the public in a profound way. The model was first introduced by Gerlach and Hine in 1968, and then later developed by Gerlach in 2001 (Bennett 2003).

Because social network linkages are nonhierarchical and information exchange is relatively open (Bennett 2003), it is believed that 'Kefeya' and 'April 6' were able to stipulate the establishment of SPIN structure and maintain it to resist government suppression by adjusting their strategies to cope with any changing conditions on the ground (Gerlach 2001).

Second, the "Information Warfare Lifecycle Model" aims to describe and explain the unfolding of events and youth activism from the initial context to the resolution and consequences of the incidents. The main challenge of the youth was to cope with the authorities (Mubarak's regime, Supreme Army Council and later the religious fascists) in their attempts to utilize technology or information to corrupt, exploit, or deny access to the adversary's similar assets (van Niekerk & Maharaj, (2010), Brazzoli (2007), which explained the reasons behind Waltz's (1998) idea that information warfare may be conducted in three domains: the physical (hardware), the informational (software, logical network connections, policies) and the cognitive (understanding, perceptions, and will). All sorts of new media were primarily used in disseminating antigovernment perceptions and give the protests some organization and cohesion. Social media served as an alternative platform of command and control for the protestors, in this way forming the basis for their network-centric warfare. However, it was impossible to use the new media without other traditional ways of communication; including the interpersonal communication, though new media have strong contribution.

Third, "Resource Mobilization Theory" opens the dialogue that concerns explaining how social movements have had their impact on the Egyptian public sphere during the escalation of events since 2011. The theory helps map

how youth activism and other social movements function as changing agents in creating a new setting or reality that makes the public more connected and united in making this change. Given this ubiquity and the potential for communicating messages to massive, global audiences, social media technologies may be seen as an important, instrumental resource for collective action and social change (El-Tantawy & Wiest, 2011).

The above-mentioned conceptual framework could help generate and instigate socio-political change and certainly identify many of the interrelated issues that can help explain the course and outcomes of the Egyptian revolution that took place in 2011 as well as the current events during the post-revolution period.

Setting the Scene for New Youth Activism in Egypt

This section provides some critical steps for giving structure to present and coming attempts at understanding the course of events. To start with, there are three key components of a prospective communication model of the Egyptian regime change: the media ecologies, the communication culture, and the temporal-spatial unfolding of events (Elike & Rofer, 2011). Many studies have proposed that the benefit of communication technologies depends greatly on who is using them and for what purpose.

Social movements through 'Kefaya' and 'April 6' organized a series of strikes protesting against the rise in the prices of basic commodities, the declining wages, and the fact that even as inflation was becoming an obvious problem, the Egyptian government continued its program of neoliberal privatization (Faris, 2008). For example, the Egyptian Movement for Change, 'Kefaya,'³ Movement was launched in 2004, and served as a starting point for a new kind of youth activism in Egypt. The group grew to over 70,000 members, amounting to 10 percent of Egypt's active Facebook user population at the time (Ottaway & Hamzawy, 2011).

Egypt has an interesting mix of use of so-called old and new media: Egypt has 6.5 million Facebook users out of its 83 million inhabitants, which seems like very low penetration in many ways, yet it remains one of the highest penetrations of social media of any Middle Eastern or North African (MENA) region.

This happens when traditional media are still governed and controlled by the state through presidential decrees and media laws⁴ that still control the broadcast sector in Egypt (Saleh, 2003). During the revolution in 2011 and later on, Egyptian authorities have constantly attempted to take strong steps to take control of the social media discourse by limiting Internet access, posting statements of support for the regime, falsely announcing that protests had been cancelled and trying to obtain information about protesters (Preston, *et al.*, 2011).

Facebook provided a new virtual organizational infrastructure and new space for dialogue for potential protesters to network with one another and share their common grievances (Duncombe, 2011). The idea of spinning protests gained popularity and protests have become self-reinforcing and able to increase without further direct organization or action by the leadership. This was, in turn, echoed and spread throughout offline communities. The role of 'orality' was evident during the revolution, especially that the majority of Egyptians remained as offline communities, the call for protests was spread verbally by taxi drivers, infamous in Egyptian society for their talkative nature (West, 2011). Activists also used other more traditional forms of distributing information, such as handing out fliers on the street.

In June 2010, Facebook disseminated information about the death of a young blogger, Khaled Said, who was brutally beaten and killed after allegedly posting an incriminating video of police officers (Bhuiyan, 2011). In reaction to his murder, Wael Ghonim, the Middle East marketing director for Google, set up the Facebook page "We Are All Khaled Said" and publicized gruesome photos of Said's corpse. The page quickly attracted 500,000 members and soon became a platform for online discussion and dialogue on shared grievances against the Mubarak regime. Soon thereafter, Egyptian state police arrested Wael Ghonim.

According to *Arab Social Media Report*, Facebook penetration in the Arab World stands at 27,711,504, as of April 2011, with Egypt dominating the scene with its 6,586,260 active Facebook users. This penetration dramatically increased between 5 January and 5 April when almost 2 million Egyptians joined Facebook, which marks the highest growth in users in the Arab region. The facebook users remained limited to younger generations between the age of 18 and 24 years of age (41 percent).

As for Twitter, there were an estimated 131,204 Twitter users in Egypt between 1 January and 30 March 2011, which generated an average of 24,000 tweets a day during that time period. Yet the nature of usage and its intensity varied a great deal, for example one user in Cairo generated 60,000 words alone during the 18-day revolution, amounting to a total of 1,500 tweets. The Arab Social Media Report tracked the volume of daily tweets in Egypt throughout the time period 1 January through 28 February, showing the peaks in Twitter use in connection with major events in the uprising, including the protests in Tunisia on 14 January and Hosni Mubarak stepping down on 11 February. According to the *Arabic Network for Human Rights Information*, the most popular hash tags in the Arab region between January and March 2011 were #Egypt (1.4 million mentions), #jan25 (1.2 million mentions), and #Libya (990,000 mentions). There were 35,000 active blogs in the Arab region in 2009,

growing to 40,000 by 2010. This number has increased dramatically since the 2011 uprisings, which is estimated at 600,000 blogs today.

It is important to emphasize the power of outside conditions, particularly the social, political, and historical contexts of the movement, as well as the availability and interplay of resources (social media and others), and the actors' efficacy in utilizing available resources to meet their goals. Although some scholars believe that the theory is losing its grip, many indicators still support its hypothesis and draw on the endurance and strength of the theory while updating it for the contemporary situation.

Showcases of Empirical Evidence

This section identifies several showcases of how youth activism and social movements reflected a new convergence of culture in Egypt by examining a number of related studies conducted during and after the revolution.

The study *Progression of the Rhythms of News Storytelling on Twitter via Following the #Egypt Hash Tag* uses frequency analysis combined with computerized content and in-depth discourse analysis to study news values and the form that the news reported via #Egypt took on during the period January 25 to February 25. The research findings indicated that news feeds collectively generated by citizens, bloggers, activists, journalists, and media outlets exposed the temporal incompatibilities between live tweeting news and reporting. The political activists were very keen on documenting events, and gradually turned to digital platforms of social association as their primary forms of opinion expression and social connection, because other forms of opinion expression were not as accessible, under surveillance, or otherwise regulated.

These news streams were effective and offered a mix from opinions, facts and emotions to expressions uttered in anticipation of events that had not yet attained mediality through the mainstream media (Papacharissi & Oliveira, 2011).

The *Tahrir Data Project* gathered empirical data on media use during the Egyptian revolution. The project consisted of three data sets documenting media use by protesters, by coordinators, and by transnational audiences (Wilson, 2011). The research findings indicated that social media use was not predominant in the demonstrations, though it played an important role in connecting and motivating protesters. The key finding related to the alteration of the larger structures and premises of information economies, though such arguments about power relationships must be limited to the media's potential, rather than the actual consequences. Though limited access (16.8 percent) was acknowledged, the findings emphasize that there are more individuals connected to the same communication network through tools and platforms, making the potential impact of that network increase exponentially.

In a study that analyzed the *YouTube Videos Asmaa Mahfouz, Egyptian Youth*

Activist contributed to the development of a new political language for Egypt, by providing a space to create an individual public political self and by modeling a new form of citizenship and activism for Egyptians (Wall & El-Zahed, 2011). However, the fact remains that many young Egyptians had turned to participatory and social media in conjunction with the traditional organization of demonstrations. It should be noted, however, that young activist networks of youth, and other politically motivated Egyptians used participatory media that existed before January 2011.

The research findings indicated that political communication via participatory media was amplified to a new intensity that pushed individual voices beyond activists' personal ties to larger networks of others, which might previously have consisted of unconnected groups and individuals. The overall result of these complimentary online and real-world actions could be considered a loosely synchronized enactment of a new form of Egyptian citizenship. The study on *Online Encyclopedia Wikipedia* as an online setting examined collective memories about users' participation in the creation of articles related to the 2011 Egyptian revolution (Ferron & Massa, 2011). The study addressed issues resulting from social and political change and how they led to cultural trauma, which in turn is deeply connected with the collective identity and the construction of the collective memory. During the escalation of events and later the revolution, Wikipedia was used to advance diverging positions, where activists experienced a sense-making process of interpreting and elaborating the past through the creation of different narratives and other memory representations. However, as time went by and the strong emotional reactions to the traumatic happenings gradually softened, the mobilizing discourse has been gradually replaced with a more rational one that is more neutral. The number of direct contributions to the articles has gradually decreased, and a substantial proportion of them experienced minor edits or indirect work for maintenance purposes.

The research project entitled *Political Activism 2.0* assessed the role of social media in Egypt's "Facebook Revolution." The study indicated that despite the fact that social media, particularly Facebook and Twitter, played a critical role in the political upheavals that have been taking place in the Middle East, though there was no empirical evidence was established between social media and political revolutions. This study showed that social media could potentially contribute to political revolution, but only under certain circumstances. There needs to be a complex network of events, forces, and people in order for social media to be effective in bringing about political change.

It is thus important to keep in mind the differences in content and capability among various forms of social media. For example, while Facebook allows for rich information and a high level of sustained interaction among its users, Twitter has the potential to reach a broader audience at a faster pace. The

Egyptian youth used Facebook and Twitter in different ways to serve different functions and goals (El-Nawawy & Khamis, 2012).

In a study that projected the work of a 30-year translated archive of news reports from almost all countries and nations, a range of computational content analysis was processed and included tone mining, geo-coding, and network analysis in order to present what is described as “Culturomics 2.05.

This emerging field explores broad cultural trends, offering an interpretation of the key functions of human society. However, this approach tends to result in a summation of events or “digested history” that portrays a hazed picture of reality instead of stimulating an environment of knowledge and understanding of current events (Stierholz, 2008). As such, the above study primarily constituted a search for “news tone” and geographic location to map these textual geographic references and quantify the latent “tone” of news into computable numeric data permits. The *SWB* mentioning Egypt is about 245 a month. Only twice in the past 30 years has the global tone about Egypt dropped more than three standard deviations below average: January 1991 (the U.S. aerial bombardment of Iraqi troops in Kuwait) and 1-24 January 2011, ahead of the mass uprising, while the only sharp negative moment took place in March 2003 with the launch of the U.S. invasion of Iraq (Leetaru, 2011). In January 2011, there has been an escalation of severe negative progression of media coverage that was characterized by a massive outpouring of international condemnation resulted from the church bombing in Egypt and the public views of political destabilization in Egypt.

Geo-political locations play a decisive role in news reporting and in “passively crowd sourcing” the media to find the locations most closely associated with globally known terrorist movements and religious movements. Thus the geographic clustering of the news, the way in which it frames localities together through social distance, could indicate different perspectives on events and possible representations of how the world views itself through the news media.

Discussion and Concluding Remarks

Young people in Egypt have experienced new alternative information sources that have inundated them daily with media messages and information that have affected them in different ways. However, it should be emphasized that this constitutes a serious challenge to how Egyptian youth decode the importance of the stories narrated by the media.

But while communication technology is changing the way we receive and use media and information, media and information literacy is changing the way we understand and apply media and information. The power of the ever-expanding and boundless social networking sites has become one of our greatest cultural challenges. It is thus reasonable to have discussed the possible explanations for the level of success, or lack of success, of the social movements

in attaining the political change desired, while considering some of the pertinent observations. First, the role of media and communications in maintaining the democratizing momentum of political movements for change in the post-uprising phase will inevitably continue to be of great significance for the reconstruction of civil society and the pace of democratic advancement.

In countries such as Egypt, this will require revised systems of media regulation and institutional governance as well as shifts in professional practices and cultural outlooks on the part of those media workers and organizations closely associated with the former regimes. Moreover, new media organizations and media forms will be required to better express established and emergent constituencies of political, social and religious interests now beginning to compete to steer processes of reform and civil society reconstruction.

But where does the balance lie in this complex matter? One has to start by excluding any definitive answer, though some facts remain concrete and are indicative of how the events have unfolded:

First, despite the limited access to new media, there is strong evidence that social movements, particularly those driven by youth, fanned the flames of revolution in Egypt beyond the control of strict government censorship, which gave desperate protestors alternative, underground ways to plan, organize and create a sustained feeling of unity. However, the 'culture of orality' in the region has succeeded in overcoming barriers and keeping connections even when the Egyptian authorities in 2011 shut off the Internet and mobile networks for five days, starting on 28th January. Second, through word of mouth and the collaborations between more literate Egyptians and the rest of the population, the protestors formed a very real mass body of protestors united in opposition. And with this gradual increase in the scope of public engagement and deliberations, the revolutions happened, though their success in leading Egypt along the path to democracy has been limited. However, the second mass demonstrations occurring on November 27, 2012 constituted a second awakening for alternative voices to the state-run media by echoing a vital source of news and serving as an inspiration to protestors.

As such, the documents and social media have both inspired and responded to the angry public, thus creating a new language of collective public.

References

Aouragh, M. & Alexandwe, A.A. (2011) "The Egyptian Experience: Sense and Nonsense of the Internet Revolution," *International Journal of Communication*, 5 (1): 1344-1358.
"About Twitter", Twitter, Available at: <http://twitter.com/about>
"Arabic Network for Human Rights Information Online," Available at: <http://www.anhri.net/en/>

Assad, R. & Roudi-Fahimi, F. (2007) "Youth in the Middle East and North Africa," *Report by the Population Reference Bureau*, Washington D.C.

Bennett, L. (2003) "New Media Power: The Internet and Global Activism." In *Contesting Media Power*. N. Couldry and J. Curran, Eds. (pp. 17-37), Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Bhuiyan, S.I., (2007) "Social Media and Its Effectiveness in the Political Reform Movement in Egypt," *Middle East Media Educator*, 1(1): 17.

Castells, M. (1996) *The Rise of the Network Society*. Oxford: Blackwells.

Cottle, S. (2011) "Media and the Arab Uprisings of 2011: Research notes, *Journalism*, 12(5): 647-659. Available At: <http://jou.sagepub.com/content/12/5/647.full.pdf+html>

Dubai School of Government, (2011) "Civil Movements: The Impact of Facebook and Twitter." *Arab Social Media Report 1*, Available At: www.arabsocialmediareport.com

Duncombe, D. (2011) "The Twitter Revolution? Social Media, Representation and Crisis in Iran and Libya Available at: <http://law.anu.edu.au/coast/events/apsa/papers/151.pdf>, 40.

Egypt Facebook Statistics (2011) *Socialbakers*. Available At: <http://www.socialbakers.com/facebook-statistics/egypt>.

El-Nawawy, M. & Khamis, S. (2012) "Political Activism 2.0: Comparing the Role of Social Media in Egypt's "Facebook Revolution" and Iran's 'Twitter Uprising'," *CyberOrient*, 6 (1). Available At: <http://www.cyberorient.net/article.do?articleId=7439>

El-Seewi, T.A. (2011) "A Revolution of the Imagination," *International Journal of Communication*, 5 (1): 1197-1206.

El-Tantawy, N. & Wiest, J.B. (2011) "Social Media in the Egyptian Revolution: Reconsidering Resource Mobilization Theory," *International Journal of Communication*, 5 (1): 1207-1224.

Eric, T. (2011) "Social Networks: The Weapons of our Modern Era," *The Talon*. Available at: http://my.hsj.org/Schools/Newspaper/tabid/100/view/frontpage/schoolid/3302/articleid/418099/newspaperid/3415/Social_Networks_The_Weapons_of_our_Modern_Era.aspx.

Faris, D. (2008) "Revolutions Without Revolutionaries? Network Theory, Facebook, and the Egyptian Blogosphere," *Arab Media and Society*.

Gerlach, L. & Hine, V. (1968) "Five Factors Crucial to the Growth and Spread of a Modern Religious Movement," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 7(23): 23-39.

Gerlach, L. (2001) The Structure of Social Movements: Environmental Activism and its Opponents. In *Networks and Netwars: The Future of Terror, Crime and Militancy*. J. Arquilla and D. Ronfeldt, Eds. (pp. 289-309), Santa Monica: Rand.

Ghannam, J. (2011) "Social Media in the Arab World: Leading Up to the Uprisings of 2011," *Report to the Center for International Media Assistance*, Washington, D.C.

Harvey, R. (2013) "Egyptian Anarchist Movement Emerges with Wave of Firebombings and Street Fights, *Undustrialism*. Available at: <http://undustrialism.com/2013/01/26/anarchists-in-egypt/>

Hofheinz, A. (2011) "Nextopia? Beyond Revolution 2.0," *International Journal of Communication* 5 (2011): 1417-1434.

- Leetaru, K.H. (2011) "Culturomics 2.0: forecasting large-scale human behavior using global news media tone in time and space," *Journal on the Internet*, 16 (9) Available at: <http://firstmonday.org/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/3663/3040>
- Masoud, T., (2011) "The Road to (and from) Liberation Square," *Journal of Democracy* 22 (1): 21.
- Morozov, E. (2011) *The Net Delusion*. London: Penguin Books.
- Munshaw, J. (2012) "Political activism in an age of social media," *Tower light, Towson's campus and community news source*, (2 September 2012). Available at: <http://www.thetowerlight.com/2012/09/political-activism-in-an-age-of-social-media/>
- Ottaway, M. & Hamzawy, A. (2011) "Protest Movements and Political Change in the Arab World," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Policy Outlook* January 28, 2011. Available at: http://carnegieendowment.org/files/OttawayHamzawy_Outlook_Jan11_ProtestMovements.pdf.
- Papacharissi, Z. & Oliveira, M.F. (2011) "The Rhythms of News Storytelling on Twitter: Coverage of the January 25th Egyptian uprising on Twitter," *Paper presented at the World Association for Public Opinion Research Conference*, Amsterdam, September 2011 Available at: http://tigger.uic.edu/~zizi/Site/Research_files/RhythmsNewsStorytellingTwitterWAPORZPMO.pdf
- Pollock, J. (2008) "StreetbookHow Egyptian and Tunisian youth hacked the Arab Spring," *Technology Review, MIT, January/February 2008*. Available at: <http://www.technologyreview.com/web/38379/>
- Rinke, E.M. & Rofer, M. (2011) "Media Ecologies, Communication Culture, and Temporal-Spatial Unfolding: Three Components in a Communication Model of the Egyptian Regime Change," *International Journal of Communication*, 5 (1): 1273-1285
- Ritter, D.P. & Trechsel, H.A. (2011) "Revolutionary Cells: On the Role of Texts, Tweets, and Status Updates in Nonviolent Revolutions," Paper presented at the conference on *Internet, Voting and Democracy*, Laguna Beach, California. Available at: http://www.democracy.uci.edu/files/democracy/docs/conferences/2011/Ritter_Trechsel_Laguna_Beach_2011_final.pdf
- Saleh, I. (2003) *Unveiling the Truth About Middle Eastern Media. Privatization in Egypt: Hope or Dope?* Cairo: Cairo Media Centre.
- Saleh, I. (2012) "When the sweet Arab Spring turns sour: The ties that bind," *Insights: Journal of the Association of Schools of Journalism and Mass Communication*, 1(1): 7-10.
- Storck, M. (2011) "The Role of Social Media in Political Mobilization: a Case Study of the January 2011 Egyptian Uprising," *M.A. (Honours with International Relations)*, University of St Andrews, Scotland. Available at: http://www.culturaldiplomacy.org/academy/content/pdf/participant-papers/2012-02-bifef/The_Role_of_Social_Media_in_Political_Mobilisation_-_Madeline_Storck.pdf
- Van Niekerk, B., Pillay, K. & Maharaj, M. (2011) "Analyzing the Role of ICTs in the Tunisian and Egyptian Unrest from an Information Warfare Perspective," *International Journal of Communication*, 5 (1): 1406-1416.
- Wall, M. & El-Zahed, S. (2011) "I'll Be Waiting for You Guys": A YouTube Call to Action in the Egyptian Revolution, *International Journal of Communication*, 5 (1): 1333-1343.

West, J. (2011) *Karama!* London: Heron Books.

Wilson, C. (2011) "Digital Media in the Egyptian Revolution: Descriptive Analysis from the Tahrir Data Sets," *International Journal of Communication*, 5 (1): 1248-1272.

Zhuo, X., Wellman, B. & Yu, J. (2011) "Egypt: The First Internet Revolt?," *Peace Magazine*, (July/Sept 2011): 6-10 Available at: <http://homes.chass.utoronto.ca/~wellman/publications/egypt/PMag-1107-Egypt-offprint.pdf>

Notes

1 Social capital has "real" offline repercussions for activists and shapes the direction of political change in general (Aouragh & Alexandwe, 2011) through mixed effort of online mobilization and street-level organization to fully grasp the dynamics of such public spheres.

2 SPIN Model: The segmentation aspect refers to the open boundaries between diverse civil society groups that nourish, decline, strengthen and lose grip (Gerlach 2001). Activists can be members in more than one group or segment simultaneously, and "may join and separate over different actions, yet remain available to future coordination" (Bennett 2003). Polycentrism emphasizes the multiple, often temporary, and sometimes competing leaders or centers of influence (Gerlach 2001). The polycentric groups are "many headed," and they "are not organized in a hierarchy; they are 'heterarchic.' They do not have a commander-in-chief. There is no one person who can claim to speak for the movement as a whole, any more than there is one group that represents the movement" (Gerlach 2001). While the integration refers to "the horizontal structure of distributed activism...The integrative function is provided by personal ties, recognition of common threats, pragmatism about achieving goals, and the ease of finding associations and information through the Internet" (Bennett 2003:22). Social media, with their openness and non-hierarchical structure, can give a boost to horizontalism within politically oriented networks (Mason 2011). Networks usually evolve from the previous aspects of "overlapping membership, joint activities... and shared ideals and opponents" (Gerlach 2001). Networking provides a space and reasons for a kind of synergy between diverse participants to coordinate participation in joint action.

3 The movement "was founded by intellectuals demanding political reform and had limited success mobilizing a critical mass of protesters, and found it especially difficult to reach workers." But this changed in 2008, when 27-year-old human resources coordinator Esraa Abdel Fattah set up a group on the social networking website calling for participation in the April 6 worker strike that was planned for a textile mill in 'al-Mahalla al-Kubra' in the Nile Delta (Hofheinz 2011).

4 (13 in 1979; 223 in 1989) and decrees (411 in 2000)

5 A web crawl of English-language Web-based news sites from across the world is used as a proxy for English Web-only news to test how much additional insight is gained

through Summary of World Broadcasts's (SWB's) ability to penetrate non-Web broadcast and print media and translate vernacular languages. This crawl includes roughly 10,000-100,000 articles a day from 1 January 2006 through 31 May 2011, and includes all URLs indexed by Google News's front page, main topic pages, and individual country feeds (using its "location:" functionality). The digitized Times compilation used a manual process to update the archive with all articles mentioning Egypt or Cairo from 1 January 2006 through 31 May 2011.